STEP 10

Communicating results

Photo credit: Oxfam

Tap stand in Swat Valley, Pakistan.

The purpose of Step 10 is to document the EMMA findings and communicate them in a timely and effective way to decision makers and other target audiences. The emphasis is on brief, convincing, visually accessible formats for reports or presentations.

Before starting Step 10, you will have…

- completed the gap-analysis, market-analysis, and response-analysis strands;
- arrived at your conclusions in the form of a response-recommendations framework.

10.1 Overview of Step 10

Objectives

- Write up the findings and conclusions of EMMA's investigation in a format that is useful and accessible to decision makers.
- Make the findings and conclusions available rapidly to an appropriate audience of managers, donors, and collaborating agencies.

Key outputs

- Executive briefing: two-page document summarizing findings and recommendations
- Presentation: 15–20 minute verbal / slide presentation
- Comprehensive EMMA report

10.2 Presenting EMMA results effectively

The audience for EMMA

Communicating the results of EMMA means ensuring that they feed into the key decision-making processes of your organization and those of others. Think carefully about who will use the EMMA results. Your audience may include emergency-programme planners and managers, colleagues in Cluster co-ordination meetings, internal fundraisers, donors who allocate resources, monitoring and evaluation staff, advocacy staff, and policy makers.

Most of these audiences are working under intense time-pressures, especially in a sudden-onset emergency situation. They need succinct, accessible, non-technical communication formats, targeted at the analysis users, and recommendations that can readily be translated into action.

The main EMMA tools – household economic profiles, market-system maps, and seasonal calendars – are important visual tools in this communication effort, in addition to the part they play in the analytical process. To maximize their effectiveness, you need to think about the needs of your audiences.

Box 10.1 Using results to get action – four rules of thumb

1. Decision makers have busy schedules and limited time.

A one- or two-page brief, or a presentation, or direct participation in decision makers' processes, is the best way to convey the minimum set of information with the maximum effect to people who can take action. Comprehensive reports have an important function, but they are not the right tool for translating information into action. Given the time constraints of most decision makers, it is not reasonable to expect anyone with a busy schedule to read a long detailed report.

2. Decision makers in the humanitarian community need to co-ordinate with others and require some consensus concerning their actions.

It is essential to engage in the processes and meetings that decision makers attend. This engagement allows you to bring information to the table as soon as it is generated, and it encourages trust and co-operation. In this context, when information that requires action is available, one of the most effective ways to convey it is through a joint presentation to the key decision makers (donors, NGOs, government, etc.) involved in funding, designing, and carrying out the required response.

3. Decision makers, once convinced, have to make their case to others repeatedly, and they need the ammunition to do so.

Be prepared to put together a series of briefing papers or notes in response to a decision maker's request. Think in terms of a press-kit approach, where saying the most in the least amount of time is critical. Try to imagine the kinds of question to which a decision maker might need quick responses, and then provide as many of these answers up front as possible.

4. Decision makers need significant lead time to acquire resources and to make logistical arrangements for interventions/projects.

The time between the end of an investigation and the issuing of a briefing note or presentation should be kept to a minimum. It is important to ensure that your information is provided in a coherent, concise, and logical way as early into the needs-assessment planning period as possible, in order to ensure that decision makers have an opportunity to incorporate it into their overall request to donors. This may require doing interim analyses, and then narrowing down the scope as more information becomes available. This can also help to whet the appetite of decision makers, and to generate a demand for more closely focused analyses as the season progresses.

Source: The Practitioner's Guide to the Household Economy Approach, FEG Consulting and Save the Children (2008).

For further guidance on how to present executive briefs and more detailed assessment reports, see Chapter 5 ('Translating outcomes into actions') in the same source.

10.3 Structure of an EMMA report

When presenting the results of EMMA, it is essential to provide answers to the key analytical questions with which you began in Step 3. Reports and presentations in any format (whether comprehensive or brief) should clearly answer these questions.

Examples of actual and model EMMA reports are provided in the EMMA reference manual.

Section 1: Executive summary, or brief

This is the key summary of EMMA's findings and recommendations. It concentrates on the outputs from Steps 6–9. Market-system maps (of baseline and emergency-affected situations) provide the foundation for the findings, backed up by household profiles and seasonal calendars if necessary. Recommendations are presented in the form of the response-option frameworks.

Section 2: Emergency context

This section is not essential for communicating to audiences on the ground (such as Cluster-group members); but in a more comprehensive report, for example to donors, the following information is vital in order to put the findings in context. It represents the outputs of Step 1 essentially, and consists of the following elements:

- a brief description of the emergency / crisis – its cause and impact;
- an explanation of the agency's role and geographical area of responsibility;
- key findings from emergency needs assessments;
- key background information concerning, for example, the socio-economy, livelihoods, political context (if appropriate) of the target population;
- a quick overview of humanitarian responses to date.

Section 3: EMMA methodology

A brief description (half a page) of the methodology used and activities undertaken to produce the report (Step 5) is vital for establishing credibility. It should cover the following topics:

- composition and experience of the team, and any training provided;
- fieldwork locations and methodology (e.g. number and types of interview);
- how leadership and support were provided to the EMMA team.

Section 4: The target population

This section summarizes the available information about the target population, including what was known before EMMA fieldwork (Step 1 preparatory information) and afterwards (Step 7):

- overview of target population: numbers, locations, livelihood profile, and general situation (refer to sections 1.5 and 7.2);
- target groups within the population: how disaggregated on particular lines, and why (sections 1.6 and 7.2);
- seasonal calendar(s) to illustrate key features of livelihoods, if relevant (section 7.5);
- impacts of the emergency on different target groups in general (e.g. changes in household income and expenditure profiles, from section 7.6 results) – a summary with links to an annex that contains the details.

Section 5: Critical market systems

This section summarizes the decision process that was undertaken in order to select specific critical market systems (Step 2). It explains – *briefly* – how you got from a general understanding of emergency needs to a list of candidates for market-system analysis.

- What are the critical market systems for the affected population – before and now? (section 2.2)
- Which systems will the EMMA team look at, and why have they been selected? (rationale from section 2.3)

Section 6: Market-system maps

This is the main descriptive section of the report, based on findings from Step 6. Try to keep it succinct. Use the system maps as much as possible, with brief explanations of the key features. Include both types of map:

- the baseline market-system map (section 6.2)
- the emergency-affected market-system map(s) (section 6.3).

Where the maps are complex and you want to illustrate different issues, it may be better to have different maps. For example, one map could show the trade volumes (quantities) at different points in the system – and could therefore be used to analyse the system's structural capacity to respond to increased demand. A second map could show prices and number of actors at different points, and could be used to analyse the system's conduct: i.e. profit margins and possible competition problems.

In any case, the maps and text should concentrate on the key features (section 6.4) – e.g. bottlenecks and constraints – in the system that were caused by the crisis, and which are relevant to the response options recommended below.

Section 7: Key findings – results of the gap analysis and market analysis

This section should summarize the main insights and interpretations that you and the team have gained from the EMMA investigation. These are essentially the outputs of Steps 7 and 8: the answers to the key analytical questions.

The gap-analysis results will probably take the following form:

- a matrix that quantifies the priority needs for each target group and shows the total gap estimated for the target population (see Box 7.3 and section 7.3);
- information about the likely duration of gaps, the access constraints, and the preferences expressed by different target groups about the form of assistance that they need (section 7.4).

The market-analysis results will probably take the form of answers to the following questions.

- *How it was before:* a summary of the market system's baseline capacity and performance (section 8.3).
- *What has happened:* findings about the impact of the emergency on the market system; and in particular an analysis of supply-and-demand problems in the emergency-affected situation (section 8.4).
- *How it is likely to perform in future:* an appraisal of the system's capacity and potential to contribute to the emergency response defined by the gap analysis (section 8.5).

This prediction will be based on the emergency's impact on the market system; how well market actors are coping, and thus performing, compared with the baseline situation; and the scale of the challenge that the system faces in now responding to affected population's needs.

NOTE: an important element of this section is to highlight the gaps in your knowledge that are due, for example, to limited information / time / team analytic skills. What you don't know, but probably need to know, may be as important as what you do now understand.

Section 8: Main recommendations and conclusions

This section is basically a summary of the outputs from Step 9.

Response logic

Do the findings above essentially direct us towards a response that relies on the market system performing well (e.g. cash), or one that assumes that it cannot do so (e.g. relief)?

How feasible is it to change the market system's capabilities through supportive interventions? (section 9.2)

Response options

Advantages, disadvantages, and feasibility of the main candidates for response activities (section 9.7).

Response recommendations

Activities or combinations of activities that the EMMA team is proposing, including recommendations for further investigation and monitoring activities (section 9.8).

10.4 EMMA: a final word

Congratulations, you have reached the end of the emergency market-system mapping and analysis toolkit.

If you have been using the EMMA toolkit already in a crisis, I hope it has enabled you to understand the important market aspects of the situation at hand, and to translate this knowledge effectively into programme decision-making processes. If you are planning to use EMMA, I hope you feel encouraged and empowered to introduce these tools and concepts in future emergencies.

This toolkit stems from a growing recognition that market systems matter immensely to people affected by disasters and crises. They matter partly because markets can often supply critical goods and services efficiently in the immediate aftermath of a crisis. They also matter because people depend on market systems as sources of income and remuneration, both in the immediate context and in the longer term.

Awareness of the value of rapid market analysis in emergencies is related to the growth of cash responses to crises. Efforts to forge stronger links between emergency and development programmes will also increase the demand for EMMA. The challenge for humanitarian agencies and donors in the coming years will be to incorporate this type of analysis into their emergency assessment and planning processes as a norm.

Because EMMA tools are rough-and-ready, speed-orientated processes, the application of the EMMA toolkit is much more of an art than a science. EMMA tools will be adapted and tailored to the needs of each unique emergency context; and EMMA users will inevitably develop their own style of mapping and analysis as they gain experience and confidence.

As time goes by, EMMA users will benefit from sharing their experiences and results with each other. Therefore we intend to create a 'community of practice' for EMMA practitioners. This will have a home at www.emma-toolkit.info. The website will be a location for an on-line version of the toolkit and accompanying reference material. It will also be a place where EMMA users can post copies of EMMA reports for others to read, share experiences and lessons learned, and get advice.